Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A personal information manager comprising:

a microprocessor;

memory operably connected to the microprocessor and storing a database;

a data input device operably connected to the microprocessor and configured to receiving receive an audio data stream, and decoding decode the received audio data stream into text;

a dialog manager module executed by the microprocessor and having a record mode and a dialog mode, in said record mode said dialog manager configured to examine examining said decoded text received from said data input device to determine whether it contains an explicit or an implicit data processing request, an explicit request being a request immediately passed to the microprocessor and an implicit request being a request which is queued and processed by the microprocessor in the background between explicit requests, in said dialog mode said dialog manager is configured to treat all requests as explicit data processing requests; said dialog manager immediately passing explicit data processing requests and queuing implicit data processing requests;

an information storage/retrieval module <u>executed by the microprocessor and</u> storing and retrieving data from a̶ <u>said</u> database, said information storage/retrieval module <s>executing</s> <u>handling implicit and explicit</u> data processing requests specified by said dialog manager<u>, in said record mode said dialog manager instructing the information storage/retrieval module to store decoded text, excluding explicit data processing requests, in said memory</u>; and

an output module converting text received from said dialog module into speech and outputting said speech in response to a data processing request;

wherein said dialog manager passes implicit processing requests to said information storage/retrieval module during periods of inactivity.

2. (Original) The personal information manager according to claim 1, wherein said dialog manager identifies an explicit data processing request during said record mode by comparing said decoded text against a list of reserved words.

3. (Original) The personal information manager according to claim 1, wherein said dialog manager identifies an explicit data processing request during said dialog mode by comparing said decoded text against a list of predefined data processing requests, assigning a match score to each of said predefined data processing requests and selecting

said predefined data processing request having a highest matching score as said explicit

data processing request.

4. (Original) The personal information manager according to claim 3, wherein if said

highest matching score is less than a threshold score said dialog manager passes an

instruction to said output module to prompt the user to select a given data processing

request from among a selected number of said predefined data processing requests.

5. (Original) The personal information manager according to claim 1, wherein said

information storage/retrieval module passes to said dialog manager a specified number of

data records retrieved in response to said data processing request if a number of retrieved

data records is below a threshold number and otherwise passes characteristic words

selected from said retrieved data records, and said dialog manager instructs said output

module to prompt the user to select a given said characteristic word used refine the data

processing request.

6. (Currently Amended) The personal information manager according to claim 1, further

comprising:

       a global word table containing a list of all of the words stored in the database; and

said dialog manager examining decoded text received from said data input device to determine whether it matches to a given said word in said global word table;

wherein a request to prompt the user for clarification is queued if the decoded text does not match any word in said global word table.

7. (Currently Amended) The personal information manager according to claim 1, further comprising:

a local word table in said memory;

said information storage/retrieval module stores atoms of data, each said atom having a unique identifier; and

said local word table containing a list of words contained in each atom of data and the number of times each word appears in a given atom; wherein if a number of atoms matching a data retrieval request exceeds a predetermined number, said dialog manager prompts a user to select a given characteristic word from a list of characteristic words, said characteristic words being derived from the local word tables of atoms matching said data retrieval request, said selected characteristic word being appended to a search string of the data retrieval request, thereby reducing the number of atoms matching a data retrieval request.

8. (Original) The personal information manager according to claim 7, wherein said

characteristic words are derived by selecting a predetermined number of the most

frequently occurring words from the local word tables of the atoms matching a data

retrieval request, provided that that the selected word does not already appear in the

search string of the data retrieval request.

9. (Previously Presented) A method for refining a search string used to retrieve data from

a database containing plural records of data, comprising:

maintaining a local table for each data record, said table including a list of words

appearing in said data record and frequency value for each said word, where said

frequency counts a number of times said word appears in said data record;

selecting a predetermined number of said words whose frequency is above a

threshold value from each of a plurality of said local tables;

prompting a user to select a given said word from said predetermined number of

words; and

adding said selected word to said search string.

10. (New) A personal information manager comprising:

a microprocessor;

memory operably connected to the microprocessor and storing a database;

a data input device operably connected to the microprocessor and configured to receive an audio data stream and decode the received audio data stream into text;

a dialog manager module executed by the microprocessor and having a record mode and a dialog mode, in said record mode said dialog manager configured to examine said decoded text received from said data input device to determine whether it contains an explicit data processing request, an explicit request being a request immediately passed to the microprocessor for execution, in said dialog mode said dialog manager is configured to treat all requests as explicit data processing requests;

an information storage/retrieval module executed by the microprocessor and storing and retrieving data from said database, said information storage/retrieval module handling explicit data processing requests specified by said dialog manager, in said record mode said dialog manager instructing the information storage/retrieval module to store decoded text, excluding explicit data processing requests, in said memory; and

an output module converting text received from said dialog module into speech and outputting said speech in response to a data processing request;

wherein said dialog manager passes implicit processing requests to said information storage/retrieval module during periods of inactivity.